



OESNEWS

Governor's Office of Emergency Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2007

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State OES, Department of Community Services and Development Urge Galt Seniors and Families to Get Disaster Ready

GALT – Can you go it alone for 72 hours following a disaster? That is the question the directors of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) asked in Galt today as they handed out disaster supply kits to nearly 200 local senior citizens and low-income Spanish-speaking families.

The project is a joint effort between the OES and CSD to help prepare vulnerable Californians who may face barriers in gathering disaster preparedness supplies for their homes.

"After a major emergency, first responders, emergency managers, and repair crews will be spread thin and may not be able to meet your needs or restore your damaged utilities for several days," said OES Director Henry Renteria. "We have a robust emergency response system in California, but it is still critical that each of you be smart, be responsible, be prepared and get ready."

According to Lloyd Throne, director of CSD, the low income and senior population is at even more risk in a disaster situation than the general public.

"It's difficult to plan for disasters when you are a low-income individual, in poor health, or isolated. The populations that our community organizations serve all over the state are vulnerable day to day and particularly at risk in a disaster situation," Throne said. "The key to disaster preparation is outreach and education at the local level. We're working with our community providers to deliver information and resources such as the OES disaster backpacks directly to the low income and senior populations."

CSD and OES are working with two organizations that receive CSD Community Service Block Grants to distribute the kits. In addition to the 200 kits distributed today, the Sacramento-area's South County Services and the Community Resource Project (CRP) will be distributing another 160 kits in the Sacramento region. South County Services is distributing kits to low-income seniors, while CRP plans to distribute kits to needy families immediately following a disaster. CSD providers in Ventura County and Merced County recently distributed disaster kits to their clients as well.

CSD's priority is to work with its network of service providers like South County Services and CRP, as well as with federal, state and local governments to strengthen, develop, and implement collaborations to improve emergency response and to provide needed resources to California's low income and senior populations in preparation for a major catastrophic event. CSD continually seeks funding and resources to help expand and provide disaster preparedness outreach and materials to its network which works directly with the low income population and has a direct impact on their lives.

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At today's event, Renteria and Throne also suggested that seniors and low-income families develop an emergency plan that includes a place where family members can re-unite if they are separated and the name and phone number of a person living out of the area who can be contacted to find out the conditions of separated family members.

"Identifying an emergency meeting place and contact is an inexpensive measure that can reduce some of the stress caused by earthquakes, floods and the other emergencies that commonly occur in California," Renteria noted.

"Preparedness doesn't have to be overwhelming," said Renteria. "Every Californian can be prepared to go it alone by taking one step at a time."

Additional information on emergency preparedness is available on the OES Get Ready Web page at www.oes.ca.gov.

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